of essential goods, imports of items which are in short supply like pulses and onions have been placed under OGL at zero per cent import duty and the duty on import of edible oils has been reduced to 15 per cent from 25 per cent in order to augment the total availability of these items. Exports of onions has been banned. Some of the essential commodities like rice, wheat palmolein and kerosene are also supplied through the public distribution at below market prices. Stringent actions are being taken against hoarders, blackmarketeers and others indulging in unfair trade practices under the Essential Commodities Act and prevention of Blackmarketing and Maintenance of Supplies of Essential Commodities Act by the State/UT Governments. As a result of the above measures rising trend in prices of onions and potatoes has been arrested.

Export of Onion and Onion Products

783. SHRI A. VIJAYA RAGHAVAN: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state the details regarding the export of onion and onion products from India in the years 1996-97, 1997-98 and 1998-99?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI RAMAKRISHNA HEGDE) : The total quantity and value of onion and onion products exported from India during 1996-97, 1997-98 and 1998-99 are as under:

Qty: MTs
Value: Rs. crores

Year	Qty	Value
1996-97	440415	303.12
1997-98*	342083	237.97
1998-99* (April 98 June 98)	118576	93.95

(SOURCE: DGCI&S, Calcutta)
*Provisional

Indigenisation of Cars

784. SHRI NARENDRA MOHAN: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that D.G. Foreign Trade has asked foreign companies manufacturing cars in India to disclose details of their indigenisation plans;

(b) if so, what are the modalities for conducting such an exercise fool-proof; and

(c) whether the European Union challenged the indigenisation clause before the WTO?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI RAMAKRISHNA HEGDE) : (a) Yes, Sir. Information has been called for from the car manufacturing companies in this regard.

(b) The information called for would give a fair idea about the indigenisation levels achieved by different companies.

(c) Yes, Sir. The European Union has filed a dispute in the WTO against our auto policy.

Promotion of Agro-Export

785. SHRI JANARADHANA POOJARY: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have a proposal under their consideration to promote agro-export;

(b) if so, the details of the proposal;

(c) the details of the agricultural commodities whose exports will be augmented; and

(d) whether interests of country's consumers will be kept in view so that there is no scarcity of items which are proposed to be exported?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI RAMAKRISHNA HEGDE) : (a) to (d) The policy of the government to permit exports of agricultural products

is governed principally by the concerns of India's food security, maximising farm incomes and earning foreign exchange. Review of export performance of agricultural products is an on-going process and accordingly policy interventions are made, as and when considered necessary, with a view to making agricultural exports increasingly viable while keeping in view the domestic requirements.

Export Policy is being constantly updated and export regime in respect of agricultural products has been liberalised. Very few items are now either prohibited for exports or their exports restricted or are subject to quantitive ceiling. Major items for which the exports are banned include cow meat, beef, wheat, onions and sugar (except for sugar under preferential quota to EU/USA).

The agricultural products exported from India include tea, coffee, raw cotton, rice (basmati and non-basmati), coarse grains, tobacco, spices, cashew, seasame and niger seeds, oil meal extractions, sugar horticulture and flori culture products, fresh fruits and vegetables, processed fruits and juices.

Export of Onion

786. DR. MOHAN BABU: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that his Ministry had cautioned the Ministry of Agriculture in August, 1998 to stop export of onions;

(b) if so, whether the advice was heeded by the Ministry of Agriculture; and

(c) if answer to part (b) be in the negative, whether this is the only reasons which caused crisis of onions in the domestic market?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI RAMAKRISHNA HEGDE): (a) to (c) Ministry of Commerce had requested the Ministry of Agriculture to communicate to NAFED that export of onions may be restricted temporarily till the price situation cases. In order to restrict export of onion, NAFED enhanced the minimum export price of onion. As a result of this, only 2539 tonnes of onions was exported in September, 1998, as compared to 40300 tonnes exported in September, 1997. Export of onion was banned on 12th October 1998.

Export Targets

787. SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) what is the target to be achieved for exports during the next five years;

(b) the details category-wise; and

(c) the steps Government are taking to achieve this target?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI RAMAKRISHNA HEGDE): (a) The targets are fixed annually by the Ministry. An export target of 20% in dollar terms has been fixed for the year 1998-99.

(b) Based on the overall target of 20% in dollar terms fixed for 1998-99 the details of provisional targets fixed for different commodity groups for the year 1998-99 are as follows:

Items	Value in US $ Million
1. Plantations	900
2. Agri. & Allied Products	3984
3. Marine Products	1400
4. Ores and Minerals	1252
5. Leather & Manufactures	1700
6. Gems and Jewellery	5800
7. Sports Goods	86
8. Chemicals & Allied Products	5128
9. Engineering Goods	4800
10. Electronics Hardware	962
11. Textiles including Handicrafts and Carpets	10370
12. Cotton Raw	250
13. Petroleum Products	550
14. Other Miscellaneous Exports	1100
15. Computer Software	2518
Total	40800